

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 OES-03 /065 W  
----- 027577

R 251240Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4544

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 5643

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO UR

SUBJ: NEW STRAINS IN SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: YUGOSLAV CONVICTION THAT SOVIETS ARE INVOLVED IN SUBVERSIVE COMINFORMIST ACTIVITIES HERE HAS PUT NEW STRAINS ON THEIR ALWAYS UNEASY RELATIONSHIP. THEIR LARGER CONCERN IS NOT WITH RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT AND AGAIN COMINFORMISTS PER SE, BUT WITH SOVIET MEDDLING AT A TIME WHEN OTHER, MORE NUMEROUS AND POWERFUL CONSERVATIVE FORCES MAY RE-EMERGE IN THE FACE OF DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. TITO HAS REACTED WITH WIDESPREAD ARRESTS OF COMINFORMISTS, WITH SERIES OF ANTY-DOGMATIST AND THUS ANTI-SOVIET SPEECHES BY MAJOR LEADERS AND WITH NEW ECONOMIC DRIVE. (SEE SEPTELS ON ECONOMY.) END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE CONSTANT OSCILLATIONS OF YUGOSLAV INTERNAL-EXTERNAL POLICY BETWEEN AN ANTI-LIBERAL, ANTI-WESTERN AND ANTI-DOGMATIST, ANTI-SOVIET STANCE, WE SEEM NOW TO BE WITNESSING TRANSITION FROM THE 1971-75 PERIOD WHEN  
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EMPHASIS PLACED ON TECHNOCRATIC-WESTERNIZING FORCES

AS MAIN DANGER TO COMPLEX YUGOSLAV BALANCE  
OF CENTRALIST-DECENTRALIST POLICIES INTO ERA WHEN  
DOGMATIST-CENTRALIST FORCES ARE PORTRAYED AS MAJOR  
THREAT. AT SAME TIME US-YUGOSLAV RELATIONSHIP IS  
CONSIDERABLY IMPROVED, WHILE SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS  
APPEAR TO BE COOLING.

3. MOST DRAMATIC CURRENT EVIDENCE OF THIS TURNING  
POINT IS SPEECH BY VICE PRESIDENT VLADIMAR BAKARIC  
OCT 21. SPEAKING IN WAKE OF LCY PRESIDENCY MEETING  
PRESIDED OVER BY TITO, HE STRESSES NEED TO STRENGTHEN  
UNITY OF LCY AND DIRECTS SPECIAL ATTENTION TO "FOREIGN  
INFLUENCE ON THE LCY ITSELF AND PARTICULARLY ITS  
MEMBERSHIP". BAKARIC ATTACKS THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE  
YUGOSLAVIA "JOIN ALL ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE WARSAW  
PACT TO CEMA". WHILE NOTING CONTINUING DANGER PRESENTED  
BY PRAXISTS, TECHNOCRATS AND OTHER FORCES, HE STRESSES  
THAT RECENTLY THE COMINFORMIST "TENDENCY HAS BEEN  
GAINING STRENGTH...SEVERAL ATTEMPTS AT ORGANIZATION  
HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED." THAT THIS CONSIDERED MAJOR  
DANGER NOW IS CONFIRMED BY "BORBA" EDITORIAL OCT 23  
WHICH STATES: "THESE DAYS WE ARE PARTICULARLY WARNED  
ABOUT COMINFORMISTS AND NEO-COMINFORMISTS WHOSE  
ESSENCE AND POLITICAL LINE IS STATE SOCIALISM AND  
JOINING THE CAMP." (WORD "CAMP" FOR YUGOSLAVS IS  
REDOLENT OF BARBWIRE AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS, IS  
RARELY USED AND ITS MENTION ALONG WITH THE NOW FREQUENTLY  
SEEN WORD "TRAITOR" INDICATES DEGREE OF EMOTION AND  
CONCERN WHICH HAS BEEN GENERATED.)

4. IMMEDIATE OBJECT OF THIS CAMPAIGN IS RELATIVELY  
SMALL GROUP OF COMINFORMISTS WHO HAVE BEEN OUT OF  
POWER SINCE 1949, WHO HAVE LARGELY FAILED TO ATTRACT  
YOUNGER GENERATION AND THUS WHO BY THEMSELVES PRESENT  
LITTLE THREAT TO REGIME. IN ADDITION TO PREVIOUSLY  
REPORTED RUMORS ABOUT ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAJOR COMINFORMIST  
TRAIL IN NEAR FUTURE, SAWPY SOURCE CLAIMS THERE WILL  
BE TWO MAJOR BUT CLOSED TRIALS WITH VERDICTS PUBLICALLY  
ANNOUNCED. WE HAVE HEARD FROM ANOTHER YUGOSLAV THAT  
SOME INDIVIDUAL TRIALS AND SENTENCING ALREADY UNDERWAY  
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AND THAT BETWEEN JULY AND SEPTEMBER: 20 ARRESTED IN  
MONTENEGRE, 40 IN BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA, 20 IN CROATIA,  
30 IN VOJVODINA, NONE IN SLOVENIA. THEY ARE, WITH  
POSSIBLE EXCEPTION VOJVODINA GROUP, SUPPOSED TO BE  
ALMOST ENTIRELY AGING PRE-'48 GROUP. THUS REPORTED  
SENTENCES OF 10, 15, 18 YEARS WITH PROVISION FOR

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 251240Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BELGRADE 5643

AMNESTY ONLY FROM SFRY PRESIDENCY PRACTICALLY ENDS  
THEIR POLITICAL LIFE.

5. BUT AS YUGOSLAVS HAVE POINTED OUT, COMINFORMISTS  
THEMSELVES ARE ONLY A THREAT IF THEY STIMULATE AND  
JOIN TOGETHER WITH MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF THOSE  
WHO ARE NOT NECESSARILY PRO-SOVIET BUT WHO IN FACE  
OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ADVOCATE MOVE AWAY FROM  
PRESENT CAREFUL BALANCE OF CENTRALIST AND DECENTRALIST  
ELEMENTS TO MORE STATE CONTROLLED ECONOMY AND MORE  
REGIMENTED AND CENTRALIZED POLITICAL SYSTEM. THIS  
GROUP INCLUDES RANKOVICI AND OTHER CONSERVATIVES KEPT  
OUT OF POWER FOR A DECADE, BUT IT ALSO CLEARLY INCLUDES  
THOSE NOW IN LCY AND IS PROBABLY PARTICULARLY STRONG  
AMONG SERBS AND MONTENEGRINS. AS BAKARIC SAID  
"IN THE PAST FEW YEARS...IN ONE PART OF THE PARTY'S  
MEMBERSHIP THE LINE BETWEEN US AND THEM (COMINFORMISTS)  
WAS NOT PERCEIVED."

6. MAIN LINE OF CRITICS'S ATTACK, AS DESCRIBED IN  
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OCT 23 SPEECH BY SAWPY PRESIDENT DUSHAN PETROVIC, IS CHARACTERIZATION OF "PASSING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AS A CRISIS OF THE SYSTEM". SUCH CRITICISM FALLING ON FERTILE GROUND OF PUBLIC CONCERN OVER HIGH INFLATION RATE, NEGATIVE GROWTH IN REAL WAGES IN 1975 AND DIFFICULT EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR 1976.

7. TITO AND OTHER YUGOSLAV LEADERS CLEARLY CONSCIOUS OF DILEMMA THEY CONFRONT--OF NEED TO GET GREATER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISCIPLINE WITHOUT LOSING BOTH APPEARANCE AND REALITY OF CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED AND DELICATE "SELF-MANAGEMENT" SYSTEM. ACCORDING TO PREVIOUSLY RELIABLE YUGOSLAV SOURCE WITH GOOD ACCESS, AT LCY PRESIDENCY MEETING TITO SAID HE WOULD NOT RESORT TO OR PERMIT REPRESSION, SAYING SOME WANT TO PUT SECURITY PEOPLE BACK IN THE SADDLE BUT HE WOULD NOT DO THIS EVEN TO FIGHT THE CONSERVATIVES THEMSELVES. HIS STRATEGY APPEARS TO BE A VIGOROUS ATTACK ON THE CONSERVATIVES WHILE (A) NOW FOCUSING THE LCY'S POWER ON MAKING THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM WORK AND COULD CONCEIVABLY, IF DIFFICULTIES PERSIST, INVOLVE (B) USING EXISTING FEDERAL-LEVEL ORGANS (E.G., SDK, NATIONAL BANK, SECRETARIAT FOR MARKETS AND PRICES) MORE EXTENSIVELY IN ECONOMIC CONTROL FUNCTIONS.

8. OUR OWN ESTIMATE IS THAT TITO WILL PROBABLY SUCCEED IN COPING AS HE HAS MANY TIMES IN THE PAST. WHILE YUGOSLAVIA IS PASSING THROUGH SOME HEAVY WEATHER AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS HERE HAVE SHARP POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS, THEIR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE NO MORE SEVERE THAN MOST OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR TRACK RECORD IS GOOD. THUS THE MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW TURN IN YUGOSLAV POLITICS MAY BE FOR THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IN RECENT DAYS, MY AMBASSADORIAL COLLEAGUES AND MANY YUGOSLAVS CAN TALK OF NOTHING ELSE.

9. THE GOY APPARENTLY HAS EVIDENCE OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMINFORMIST GROUPS NOW UNDER ARREST. THUS BREZHNEV'S REPORTED EXEMPTION OF YUGOSLAVIA FROM HIS DOCTRINE DURING TRIP TO BELGRADE IN 1971 AND SOVIET ASSURANCES OF NON-INVOLVEMENT IN THE BAR GROUP OF COMINFORMISTS TO KARDELJ DURING HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW IN

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1974 ARE REVEALED FOR WHAT THEY WERE. AS SOVIET EMBASSY COUNSELOR SIDELNIKOV REMARKED TO POLCOUNS OCT 24 IN TONE OF HURT INNOCENCE "YUGOSLAVS DO NOT SEEM TO

TRUST US ANY MORE."

10. HOWEVER, JUDGING BY PAST CYCLES YUGOSLAVS THEMSELVES ARE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY TO PUSH ANTI-SOVIET DRIVE TOO FAR. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO TEMPER IT WITH CRITICISM OF WESTERN SUBVERSION, DOMESTIC LIBERALS, POSSIBLY EVEN SOME CHETNIK OR USTASHI TRIALS. SO WHILE WE ENJOY THE SOVIETS DISCOMFITURE, WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE YUGOSLAVS' PERCEIVED NEED FOR BALANCE.

COMMENT: IT'S CONCEIVABLE THAT THE YUGOSLAVS ARE EXAGGERATING THE THREAT OR ACTUALITY OF DIRECT SOVIET INTERVENTION FOR THEIR OWN INTERNAL POLITICAL PURPOSES BUT I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE FISHING UP TO THEIR ARMPITS.

SILBERMAN

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